Holiday Food Gifts

A homemade food gift can be a lovely way to reach out in friendship during the holiday season. With so many rich, calorie-filled foods available at home and gatherings this time of year, I have selected a recipe – “Spiced Nuts” – that has less fat and sugar and is very quick to make. I love spiced nuts and am always looking for the “perfect” recipe. This one is pretty good, it has a dry, crunchy texture, is extremely easy and has no added fat, just the healthy fat found naturally in the nuts.

Email me at jcharvoz@email.arizona.edu if you would like to share your favorite spicy nut recipe. I would love to try it!

Spiced Nuts

Try varying this recipe by changing the type of nut or using different spices added to the brown sugar. You could try a sweet and spicy version by adding a little red chili pepper to the mix or make it sweet and savory by using pepper, mustard and garlic powder. I have not tried either of these ideas – you are on your own – but let me know any interesting results!

Makes 2 cups or 16-18 (1 oz.) servings

½ cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground allspice
1/8 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
4 ½ teaspoons water
2 cups raw, unsalted mixed nuts

In a microwave-safe bowl, combine the brown sugar, spices and water. Microwave the mixture, uncovered, on high for one minute. Stir, microwave for another 30 to 60 seconds or until syrupy. Add nuts and stir to coat. Spread the nuts out in a 9-inch microwave-safe pie plate. Microwave the nuts in the pie plate, uncovered, on high for 2 to 4 minutes or until the syrup bubbles on the nuts. Watch the nuts – do not let them burn! Immediately spread onto a greased baking sheet. When the nuts are cool, break them apart.

Nutrient Analysis per serving (18):
124 Calories
3 g. Protein
10 g. Carbohydrate
1.5 g. Fiber
8 g. Fat
1 g. Saturated Fat